Becoming a Classic in American Literature

Junior English

Topeka West High Library Media Center

Having read the work by your author, you are now ready to begin researching that author and the work. You should gather information relating to five areas; once the information is gathered, you will be asked to prepare an oral presentation on your reading and research. Two class periods have been allotted for library research.

Research the following five areas and be sure to answer each with examples from the work and literary criticism. You are, however, not limited to just the questions listed; you may add to this basic information.

* Work’s **characters**—Are the characters stereotypical or does the author develop them into life-like persons?
* **Historic setting** of the work—Would this work be considered representative of the time it was written or is it a timeless piece of fiction? (consider primary sources including primary literary criticism)

* **Setting** of the work (role of place)—How important is the setting to the work? Could it be modernized and if so, how?
* **Criticism** (what others have said about the work)—What do the critics (primary and secondary) say about your work? These criticisms should be directly quoted or paraphrased to support your opinion.

* **Biographical** information on the author—This is a **minor part** of your oral presentation and must address only relevant information that pertains to the author’s desire to write and journey to become a writer. Be sure to include the author’s age when the work was written.

Incorporate your findings from the above into a cohesive presentation on character, historic setting, or the role of place in your work. Biography will be a minor piece of your presentation; consider using it as introductory material or, depending on the topic chosen, as support for the topic. Likewise, a summary of your book will be minimal; just provide a thumbnail overview of the work read. Criticism should be from an authoritative source such as a subscription database or print. Plan on using both print and electronic sources although there is not a required number. It is recommended that you first gather information offered through the subscription databases.

You should plan to submit the following on the day of your presentation:

* All notes taken including photocopied material
* A Works Consulted list in MLA format
* Either an outline of your oral presentation or the presentation text

# Sources

* Print  
  REF 808.8 Masterplots (alpha by title)

809 Mag 1300 Critical Evaluations of Selected Novels and Plays (4 vols.)

809 How Characters in 19th Century Literature

809 Cyc Cyclopedia of Literary Places (3 vols.)

809.3 Cri Critical Survey of Short Fiction (7 vols.)

809.3 Mac Survey of Science Fiction Literature ( vols.)

809 Lit Literature and Its Time (7 vols.)

808.83 Sho Short Story Criticism (40 vols.)

809.3 Joh Social Impact of the Novel (note index numbering)

813 Bea Beacham’s Popular Fiction in America

813 Fac Facts on File Companion to American Short Stories

813 Mas American Fiction Series

Ref 920’s Biographical Sources (includes DAB, Encyclopedia of World Biography, “Notable” series, etc.)

American Heritage Magazine

Books in the 800’s

* **Electronic**

Reference Library Folder

* + - \* Worldbook Online (just a beginning, brief biography, historic events, etc)
    - Gale Group Student Databases🡪Proceed🡪Gold🡪Use Advanced Search and Keywords (check all tabs: Reference, Magazines & Journals, and Primary Sources)
    - \* InfoTrac Web—
      * Expanded Academic ASAP, Literature Resource Center, Academic OneFile, InfoTrac OneFile

\* Available from home at [www.kslib.info](http://www.kslib.info)

[twhslmc@wikispaces.com](mailto:twhslmc@wikispaces.com)